

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-4311**

June 7, 2022

The Honorable Jennifer Granholm  
Secretary of Energy  
U.S. Department of Energy  
1000 Independence Avenue, Southwest  
Washington, DC 20585

Dear Secretary Granholm:

I write to you regarding the reliability of the American power grid. As you may know, the North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC) indicated that critical infrastructure sectors are facing increased cyber security threats from Russia in response to the United States' support for the nation of Ukraine. Moreover, the *Wall Street Journal* has reported that power generation is struggling to keep up with heightened demand across the country, and that the rate of grid failures have risen dramatically—from fewer than 25 annually in 2000 to more than 180 in 2020.

These failures are due, in part, to the increasing use of intermittent renewable sources over more reliable thermal power sources. These energy threats are serious, with life and death consequences for Americans. **I am concerned the Department of Energy (DOE) lacks a clear plan to protect our critical infrastructure systems from nefarious actors, like Russia, and ensure peak power demand can be sufficiently met.** I am also wary about the continued aggressive efforts by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to crowd out reliable thermal power resources, and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's (FERC) lack of attention to reliability in the pursuit of climate-oriented policy goals. With this in mind, please provide a response to the following inquiries by July 15<sup>th</sup>, 2022:

1. NERC recently indicated that different regions may face a shortfall in generating capacity to meet demand this summer. Do you expect an increase in the number of interruptions to the grid in 2022 as compared to this prior year? Please provide any internal estimates demonstrating power-generation surpluses or deficits for the upcoming year, as well as your plan to ensure Americans do not face prolonged blackouts.
2. Please list all major actions you have taken to increase grid reliability during your time as Secretary of Energy.
3. Has DOE consulted the EPA on the potential grid reliability issues if the proposed "Ozone Transport" rule is finalized?

4. DOE recently announced three new offices within the agency, including the Grid Deployment Office. Please describe the actions of the Grid Deployment Office related to enhancing grid security and reliability.
5. Does President Biden's goal of completely decarbonizing the power sector by 2035 threaten the reliability of the electrical grid? Does DOE have an analysis on the level of reserve margins necessary to maintain a reliable grid at various levels of renewable penetration in our major power markets? If so, are there details available on the type of resource mix necessary including the cost to achieve the desired reliability results and the impact on the American economy and people? Have the details been coordinated with the regional RTOs, FERC and NERC?
6. Has DOE seen an increase of attacks on our grid since Russia began its aggression against Ukraine? If so, what actions has DOE taken to help prepare critical infrastructure operators for potential attacks against our grid?
7. What is the methodology used by DOE to alert grid operators who are at heightened risk of attack?
8. Please describe DOE's coordination with the Department of Justice (DOJ), Homeland Security, EPA, and FERC to promote grid reliability. What has been the tangible outcome of such coordination in terms of prevented attacks, increased prosecutions, etc.?
9. How does DOE collect intelligence on emerging cyberthreats to the grid?
10. What public-private partnerships are DOE utilizing to promote grid resiliency?

Intermittent renewables will inevitably play a role in our electric infrastructure; however, we must move forward with a central focus on affordability and reliability. We are in an energy *expansion*, not an energy transition. America must be able to meet our domestic needs while prioritizing the key principle of reliability. Main Street businesses and families cannot afford to pay even more for energy costs, especially when individuals are facing historically high inflation costs.

If our country does not develop a long-term, serious energy policy for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, then America will soon face a reliability crisis that inflicts needless pain on American families, businesses, and workers. Thank you for your attention to this important matter, and I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "August Pfluger".

August Pfluger  
Member of Congress